

MOUNTAIN LAKES

Brendan James places in national photo contest

Brendan James, a seventh-grade student at The Wilson School in Mountain Lakes, earned second place in a "Portraits of Learning" national photography contest sponsored by Adobe through "Tech & Learning Magazine"

Brendan's photograph was selected from over 6,000 entries to earn second place in the middle school category, and was printed in this month's issue of the magazine. He was the only winner from New Jersey.

With the theme "My Point of View," the contest invited K-12 students to submit photos on any subject. Students were allowed to use digital tools to manipulate the image to better express their viewpoints. The judges, professional photographers, looked for style, creativity, and use of light and color. The contest required entrants to write short descriptions of their photographs.

Brendan described his photo, "Yosemite Stream," this way: "To get this picture I went out to the stream after dark and set my shutter speed for a long period of time in order to get this silky effect on the rapids. I wanted to show the water as a moving whole instead of individual droplets."

A determined young man, Brendan had convinced his family after a long day of hiking to return to the stream at dusk so he could get the shot. Apparently, it was worth the effort.

A two-time winner of Wilson's annual Merit Scholarship Performance Award for his photography and piano skills, Brendan was encouraged to enter the "Tech & Learning" contest by his computer and technology teacher, Cathy Varga.

Varga helps students in every grade develop technological competence through the integration of

technology into the classroom. Weekly computer lessons focus on basic computer operations and concepts, software productivity tools, Internet literacy tools, and Internet safety.

The school has a newly upgraded computer lab with 12 multimedia laptops. In addition, each classroom has a Smart Board, software, LCD multimedia projectors and computer workstations or laptops. Teachers' homework websites provide online communication between parents, students and teachers.

Brendan is one of three student graphic designers who enhance and format student artwork and photography for the school's literary magazine using a variety of software programs available in the school's computer lab. He says this work has improved his photographic eye, and he is grateful to Varga for encouraging him to enter

the contest.

To see Brendan's slide show, log on to the Wilson School Web site www.thewilsonschool.com, click "current families," and then "kudos!"

Founded in 1909, The Wilson School is an independent Pre-

K through eighth-grade school located in Mountain Lakes. The school has held to its core principles for 100 years, while at the same time managing to be one of the most technologically advanced schools in Morris County.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS VAKULCHIK

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This award-winning photograph of "Yosemite Stream," was taken by Wilson School seventh-grader Brendan James and earned second place in "Portraits of Learning," a national photography contest with more than 6,000 entries sponsored by Adobe through "Tech & Learning Magazing."